

Warner Ranch - Barn-Trading Post  
Near Warner Springs  
San Diego County  
California

HABS No. CAL-425

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Western Office, Division of Design and Construction  
1000 Geary Street  
San Francisco, California

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PHOTOGRAPH-DATA BOOK REPORT  
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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WARNER RANCH, TRADING POST-BARN

ADDRESS: Warner Springs, San Diego County, California  
OWNER: Vista Irrigation District  
OCCUPANT: Vista Irrigation District  
USE: Vacant

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Warner Ranch is a Registered National Historic Landmark and California Historical Landmark #311.

It was the focal point for emigrants traveling over the Santa Fe Trail to the California settlements and gold fields from 1844; and it served as a way-station for Butterfield's Overland Mail Company from September 16, 1858, until April, 1861. It was the first well supplied trading post reached by emigrants after the long trek across the southwest deserts. It figured prominently in events incident with the arrival of the Army of the West under command of General Stephen Watts Kearny during the United States war with Mexico and the Battle of San Pasqual which was the sharpest engagement in the conquest of California. During the Civil War, Camp Wright was established on the ranch for the final staging of the California Volunteer Battalion under Colonel James H. Carleton.

The buildings, extant, are of adobe brick and hand hewn timbers put together by mortise and tenon and wood pegs, typical of the early west.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Warner Ranch - legal ranch name "Rancho San Jose' del Valle" - comprising 11 leagues was first granted to Jose' Antonio Bernardino

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Pico in 1840,<sup>1</sup> who abandoned it in 1842 due to continuous trouble from Indians. It was regranted in 1844 to Johnathon Trumble Warner, who had become a Mexican citizen for the purpose, and assumed the name of Don Juan Jose' Warner. Complicating the title to the land, the U. S. District Court, on February 23, 1857, surprisingly reversed the Land Commission - and itself - by confirming four leagues of land (Rancho Valle de San Jose') to Silvestre de la Portilla, reinstating his neglected 1834 grant.<sup>2</sup> By this decision the Warner Ranch House and Trading Post, which was erected in 1844, was located 330 feet south of the southern boundary of Warner's property and on that of Portilla, as determined by official surveys which were not made until 1878.<sup>3</sup>

Further detailed historical information and references are included under CAL-424, Warner Ranch, Ranch House.

#### REFERENCES

1. Morrison, Lorrin L. - WARNER, The Man and The Ranch - 1962, p. 17
2. Ibid - p. 75
3. Wright, William Lawton - THE WARNER'S RANCH BUTTERFIELD STATION PUZZLE - Booklet, reprinted from The Westerners Brand Book, Book Nine, Los Angeles Corral - 1961, p. 8

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#### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The surviving buildings at the ranch and trading post consist of a one-story adobe ranch house (CAL-424) and trading post-barn

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constructed of hand hewn timber frame with remnants of adobe walls that are covered with board and batten weather boarding.

#### EXTERIOR

Overall Dimensions - Approximately 46' x 76'. Remnants of adobe walls at south and west sides and the adobe cross wall, approximately 48' from south front, indicate that the building was built in stages at various times and may have at one time served a purpose of greater significance than as a barn. A butt joint on the adobe wall on the west side approximately 15' from the south wall and the difference in texture and erosion of the adobe brick as well as structural variations, also indicate variable construction periods.

Foundation - Field stone

Wall Construction - Sundried adobe brick, board and batten weather boarding, wood frame and shake siding at tack room at northwest corner of building; and board and batten stable lean-to at east side.

Roof - Gable roof, pitched 6 in 12, peeled log rafters 4" plus diameter at approximately 30" o.c. and 1" rived sheathing strips at approximately 16" o.c. Wood shake roof, patched and overlaid with corrugated iron.

#### INTERIOR

Interior Framing - Rough hewn posts and beams with mortise and tennon connections secured with wood pegs and braced with struts and knee braces dapped and pegged. Intermediate posts are two-story with upper posts bearing on  $8\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $10\frac{1}{2}$ " longitudinal girder placed approximately 7'-8", floor to top of girder.

Floor to top of top girder is 14'-9". Floor to top of wall girt is approximately 10'-4".

Row of columns of center bay are 13'-8", center to center.

Flooring - 1 x 6 T&G over sleepers on ground.

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NOTE

Northwest section, approximately 28' x 35', is of wood frame and is layed out for tack room and grooming stables with a mezzanine floor at 8' level.

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